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Busby, MT 59016

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, D.C. 20423
December 3, 2004



Dear Board Members,

I am thoroughly appalled that once again the Tongue River Railroad is being proposed! I strongly oppose such a wrong minded plan. Do NOT follow through with approving this unnecessary and destructive railroad line.

Come live here and experience the life and beauty of the Tongue River Region. It will break your heart to see this railroad happen. We do NOT want our region to become an industrial zone. There has been NO serious study of the impact of the entire 130-mile long railroad on the Tongue River Valley and the people and animals that live here. This is a violation of the National Environmental Policy Act's mandate to examine the cumulative effect on a region of a proposed project. It is time to obey the law carefully. There must be a comprehensive EIS that takes into account the proposed coal bed methane wells, the proposed railroad, a 750 megawatt power plant and coal mine. Please do your work with integrity. Many lives here depend on that!

We are very concerned about the quality of our air, already compromised by nearby power plants and strip mining. Also, the railroad will negatively impact the fragile Tongue River and adjacent streams. The draft EIS was done without input from all landowners impacted by the route. What happened to respecting property rights as well as the land itself?

Finally, the proposed railroad is yet another economic error. It will duplicate existing lines while providing no service to coal mines that need rail access. It will take away Colstrip coal's competitive advantage in Midwest markets.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns. Instead of all this greenhouse gas creating energy "development" ***put your energies into developing wind and solar power.*** We have done so and it works wonderfully. Best of all, except for the one-time consumption of energy it took to make our panels and windmill, it feels so deeply satisfying to know that when we use electricity we are hurting nothing! This is good for the human heart and soul, not to mention our budget.

Sincerely,


Marya Grathwohl